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Senate committee calls for preservation of the Pledge of Allegiance

LANSING – The Senate Education Committee today approved a resolution to preserve the Pledge of Allegiance, announced Sen. Bill Hardiman, R-Kentwood, the resolution's sponsor.

Senate Resolution 22 calls on the U.S. Supreme Court to allow the phrase "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance. A federal appeals court ruled previously that the phrase was unconstitutional and promoted a state religion.

"Americans have said the Pledge of Allegiance – with this contested phrase – for nearly five decades," Hardiman said. "It should be clear to all that in that time the freedom to worship or not to worship has not been diminished in any way."

John Booy, executive director of Potters House Christian Schools in Grand Rapids testified in support of the resolution.

"I believe that using the phrase 'under God' on a daily basis in our school systems shows us that we have a higher moral standard that all of us must adhere to," Booy said, adding that opponents' concerns about the phrase establishing a state religion were unfounded. "During those 50 years, the country hasn't gone anywhere near to a state establishment of religion."

The resolution now goes before the full Senate. The Supreme Court is expected to start hearing arguments in the case as early as next week.

Besides Booy, the committee also heard from school children, a firefighters union, veterans groups and others about why the phrase should be kept in the pledge.

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